



Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce 5856 S. Main St., Clarkston, MI 48346 248.625.8055 Fax 248.625.8041 www.clarkston.org

Senate Economic Committee
Senator Mike Kowall, Chair
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

September 17, 2012

RE: Support for SB 1269

Dear Senator Kowall,

I'm writing with strong support for McLaren's proposal to transfer Certificate of Need beds to Independence Township permitting them to build a hospital here.

The Clarkston area business community is comprised primarily of small businesses that are locally owned and operated. Our largest employer is the Clarkston Public Schools.

McLaren's proposal to build a hospital in our community is unquestionably a catalyst for economic development. It would also be a significant contributor to quality of life, not just for Independence Township but for Northern Oakland County.

I've been executive director of the Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce for 16 years. I know most of the business owners in our community personally. I know their struggles through the recession, their battles with health issues and the emotional and physical toll on them when one of their family members—their spouse, parents or their children-- have an emergency or are diagnosed with a serious disease.

I know a business owner who, upon receiving a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease, was faced with the decision to move out of our community, away from neighbors, friends and family—so he could be closer to support services, physical therapy and medical care as the disease progressed. We did not have the facilities here to serve him and daily drives of 30-40 minutes to access services were obstructive.

I have heard it argued that there is a glut of hospital beds within a 30 mile radius of our community. I would argue just as emphatically that when you are in need of a trauma center—that 30 mile radius is very cold comfort, particularly if you've ever tried to drive that 30 mile radius in rush hour traffic or severe weather.

Pontiac is fortunate enough to have three hospitals that are among the most respected in southeastern Michigan. They feature the finest in emergency trauma clinics, cardiac care centers and cancer centers.

Three hospitals.

I believe competition lowers health care costs. McLaren is a large, diversified integrated system that focuses on quality, sound management and economies of scale to reduce costs. They have a history of turning around struggling hospitals.

The current Certificate of Need process favors the status quo and grandfathered hospitals, offering little incentive for innovation or change. Certificate of Need protects existing hospitals while discriminating against any competitor preparing to build a new hospital.

The battle over Certificate of Need isn't going to be resolved quickly.

But I repeat . . . McLaren isn't asking to add beds—they're asking to move some of the beds from an area that used to have a higher density population to an area that has a growing population.

I urge you to support this proposal.

Sincerely,



Penny S. Shanks
Executive Director
Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce

cc:

Dave Hildenbrand (R) Majority Vice Chair, 29th District
Mike Nofs (R) 19th District
Judy K Emmons (R) 33rd District
Geoff Hansen (R) 34th District
Tupac A Hunter (D) Minority Vice Chair, 5th District
Virgil Smith (D) 4th District